

REMARKS

Claims 30-36 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action dated July 1, 2005, claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Claims 30, 34, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,067,561 to Dillon ("Dillon") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,654,787 to Aronson et al. ("Aronson"). Claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dillon in view of Aronson in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,275,848 to Arnold ("Arnold"). Claim 33 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dillon in view of Aronson in further view of Arnold. Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dillon in view of Aronson in further view of Arnold in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,644 to Devine et al. ("Devine"). Claim 36 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dillon in view of Aronson in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,485 to Homan et al. ("Homan").

Applicant notes that, to date, the Form PTO-1449 from the Information Disclosure Statement filed September 19, 2003, has not been returned.

The disclosed embodiments of the invention will now be discussed in comparison to the prior art. Of course, the discussion of the disclosed embodiments, and the discussion of the differences between the disclosed embodiments and the prior art subject matter, do not define the scope or interpretation of any of the claims. Instead, such discussed differences merely help the Examiner appreciate important claim distinctions discussed thereafter.

The present application discloses a method and system for securely distributing an Email communication to multiple individual recipients in an efficient manner using centralized storage and management. According to one embodiment, the method includes receiving an Email communication containing an indication of the recipient(s) for the message, and making a determination whether the indication is for multiple recipients. Unlike conventional methods, the present method uses an email communication program that makes a conditional decision that if the indication is for multiple recipients, the program does not send the Email communication to the recipients, but rather centrally stores the Email communication on a server, and sends only a short notification of the Email communication to each of the multiple recipients without sending the Email communication itself. Thus, a single copy of the Email communication can be stored on a server computer for delivery on an individual basis to multiple recipients when requested. The program does not send the Email communication to any recipient until it receives a response from at least one of the recipients that contains a request for the Email

communication. If the indication is not for multiple recipients the Email communication is sent to the recipient without being stored.

The Examiner has cited Dillon. Dillon is directed to sending notifications (alerts) of Email messages to recipients using a hybrid network that transmits notifications via a continuous high speed channel. Other than these features and in particular, the features regarding how the alerts are sent, the handling of messages as taught by Dillon is conventional in the art.

The Examiner acknowledges that Dillon fails to teach or suggest an Email communication program configured with instructions to store a single copy of the Email communication on the server if the Email is designated for a plurality of recipients. To remedy the deficiencies of Dillon, the Examiner has cited Aronson. The Examiner asserts that Aronson discloses “providing an Email communication program on a server that is configured with instructions to store a single copy of the Email communication on the server if the Email communication is designated for the plurality of recipients.” (Office Action dated July 1, 2005; Page 4, ¶ 10). As understood by the Applicant’s undersigned, the Examiner has interpreted Aronson as purportedly teaching an Email filter configured with instructions to store a single copy of the Email communication on the server if the Email is designated for a plurality of recipients. (Office Action dated July 1, 2005; Pages 11-13, ¶ 37-39). However, Aronson clearly does not teach or suggest an Email communication program configured with instructions for determining whether multiple recipients have been designated and, in fact, clearly teaches away from such an Email communication program. Aronson states that “once a particular e-mail message has been identified as spam, only a single copy of that message is stored in storage module 340, regardless of how many different e-mail users the message is addressed to.” (Aronson; col. 10, line 65-col. 11, line 1). Thus, Aronson teaches that it does not matter if multiple recipients have been indicated because it always stores a single copy of the message in the storage module 340. In other words, Aronson does not teach or suggest an Email program configured with instructions to store a single copy of the Email communication on the server if the Email is designated for a plurality of recipients. Instead, Aronson always stores a single copy of the message and, thus, fails to determine whether multiple recipients are indicated.

In summary, none of the cited references and, in particular, Aronson, teach or suggest an Email program configured with instructions to store a single copy of the Email communication on the server if the Email is designated for a plurality of recipients. Neither, Dillon, Arnold, Devine, nor Homan remedy this deficiency in Aronson.

Turning now to the claims, the patentably distinct differences between the cited references and the claim language will be specifically pointed out. A *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established because the cited references do not teach or suggest an Email communication program configured with instructions for determining whether multiple recipients have been indicated and storing a single copy of an Email communication if it is determined that multiple recipients have been indicated. Claim 30 recites, in-part, “providing an Email communication program on a server that is configured with instructions to store a single copy of the Email communication on the server if the Email communication is designated for the plurality of recipients.” The cited references, either individually or in combination, fails to teach or suggest the above conditional limitation. As noted above, the cited references and, in particular, Aronson, teaches that a single copy of the Email communication is stored regardless or without determining if multiple recipients are designated. Claims depending from claim 30 are also allowable due to depending from an allowable base claim and further in view of the additional limitations recited in the dependent claims.

With regard to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 1, a flow chart (new Figure 1A) has been added that describes a method that is encompassed by the limitations recited in originally filed claims 11, 12, and/or 30. Accordingly, no new matter has been added because the limitations in the originally filed claims have merely been put into flow chart form. However, Applicant believes that the written description, as a whole, adequately described the conditional limitations objected to by the examiner. Accordingly, the objections to the drawings should be withdrawn.

All of the claims remaining in the application (claims 30-36) are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures:

Postcard

Check

Fee Transmittal Sheet (+ copy)

6 Sheets of Drawings (including new Figure 1A)

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached new sheet of drawings includes a new Fig. 1A. In Fig. 1A, the flow chart generally describes the manner in which an embodiment of a method of the invention functions.

Attachments: New Figure 1A